Indianapolis Charter Schools

Fourth Year Review

Overview

Charter schools completing the 4th year review take part in an in-depth site review, which generally includes:

- Planning and pre-visit analysis
- Evidence gathering on site (three days)
- Development of findings (CEEP)
- Feedback to schools
- Written report to schools
- 5th year follow-up as necessary

Throughout the year, CEEP will work with the school staff to provide mentoring and guidance to be sure that the evaluative process is on track and that staff know what is expected in the pre-visit documentation, scheduling, and to answer any questions or concerns prior to the multi-day visit. After the site visit, CEEP staff will work with the Charter School sharing drafts of the site report to ensure that the findings have been reported accurately and based on everyone's understanding of the visit.

You can find the detailed description of the 4th Year Process at:
http://www.indygov.org/NR/rdonlyres/58B495DB-10E4-4AB5-9E8B-F908597DC4B1/0/FINALProtocolElectronic2008.pdf

Process Overview

Based on the work of the review team who will review documentation and visit the school, the fourth year site review will address all of the standards in the performance framework. Review team staff work based on code of conduct that guides the process of:

- Collecting evidence
- Making claims
- Making judgments (based on the performance framework)
- Providing feedback on strengths and weaknesses

The goal is to synthesize the myriad of evidence into findings that focus on what is most important for the continued growth and improvement of the school. The judgments are open for discussion until the final review document has been submitted to the Mayor's Office. This allows the school to provide additional documentation related to any standard which has not been fully met on initial review.

Site review teams will collect evidence, including:

- Review of pre-visit documentation (similar to documentation required in 3rd year)
- Classroom observations
- Focus group interviews
- School leader discussions
- Board member questionnaire

Timeline

On a very general level, there are three phases to the fourth year process:

Pre-Visit Timeline

- The *Mayor's Office* informs the school of the visit. (Fall semester)
- *Team Leader and Mayor's Office* provides school leadership with a conceptual orientation to the process. (Fall semester)
- *Team Leader* provides school leadership and any contributing school staff with a detailed review of the process, focusing on the School Task Checklist. (early Spring/late Fall Semester)
- *School* sends documents from the School Task Checklist of the protocol to the team leader. (4 weeks prior to visit)
- *Mayor's Office* sends documents from the School Task Checklist of the protocol to the team leader. (3 weeks prior to visit)
- *Team Leader* sends a copy of the protocol, the schedule, classroom observation instrument, interview questions and documents for pre-visit analysis to the other *Team Members.* (3 weeks prior to visit)
- *The Mayor's Office* creates a draft schedule of interviews and classroom visits, finalizes the schedule with the school's input and sends a copy of the schedule to the school and to Team Members. (1-2 weeks prior to visit)

On-Site Timeline

- *Fourth Year Charter Review visit. (*2.5 days)
- *Team Leader* provides feedback to school leadership. (Ongoing)
- *Team Leader* presents oral report of findings to school leadership. (Last day of visit)

Following the Visit Timeline

- *Team Writer* develops a draft report and shares with team members. (1 week following visit)
- *Team Writer* edits report to incorporate team member feedback; sends to Team Leader; *Team Leader* sends draft of report to the school for factual review. (2 weeks following visit)
- *School* provides factual corrections to Team Leader. (3 weeks following visit)
- *Team Leader* incorporates feedback and sends final report to the *Mayor's Office* and the *school. (*4 weeks following visit)

Roles & Responsibilities

Note: for a detailed description of the site review team roles, including the team leader and its members, please see the detailed protocol online.

School Responsibilities

To be an effective partner in the process, the school:

1. *Acts as an essential partner in the site visit process*
   a. The school makes the purpose and process of the review team's visit clear to all faculty and staff.

b. The school welcomes the visiting team and recognizes its efforts on behalf of the school.

c. The school works with the team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.

d. The school engages faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on the school's performance.

2. *Communicates with the team*

a. School leadership works collaboratively with the Mayor's Office to ensure all necessary documents are provided in a timely manner both before and during the visit.

b. The school leadership maintains good communication with the team leader throughout the process, honestly expressing concerns and feedback from staff.

c. The school leader responds honestly and frankly to the team's developing judgments by stating the school's position and making available additional evidence to support its position, should it differ from other members of the team.

3. *Prepares documents for the visit*

a. Before the site visit, the school prepares and submits to the Mayor's Office the documents listed in Appendix A.

4. *Designates a meeting room*

a. The team will need a meeting space during the day. The space should allow for confidential meetings and should be available to team members for the full visit. Interviews should not be scheduled in this space but planned for elsewhere in the building. The school is responsible for ensuring that the documents listed in Appendix A are available in the meeting room for the team.

4th Year Site Visits

Time on site moves from a fixed structure designed to ensure good coverage of the school to a more flexible schedule that allows the team to follow up on emerging judgments. Every attempt within the limits of time and personnel is made to visit all classes at the school. Since it is not possible to predict what will emerge from the evidence collected, the team requires the flexibility to move about the school and observe any aspect of the school without notice. However, as a matter of courtesy and in the spirit of developing and maintaining a good working relationship, the team leader works with the school to define as much of the schedule as possible without restricting the team's ability to pursue important evidence.

Sample Site Visit Outline

Typical Visit Schedule

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
	7:30 AM: School tour, task assignments	7:30 - 8:30 AM: Feedback to school leaders
If needed: Team meeting and orientation to the site review process	8:30 - 11:30 AM: Classroom visitations, interviews, including second principal interview	8:30 - 11:30 AM: Classroom visitations, interviews, materials review as needed
12 PM: Hotel check-in for team and travel to school	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM: Team lunch, debrief	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM: Team lunch, debrief
1:00 - 2:00 PM: Initial team meeting	12:30 - 2:30 PM: Classroom visitations, interviews	12:30 - 3:30 PM: Finalize judgments, collate evidence

2:00 - 3:00 PM: Initial principal/ leadership team interview	3:00 - 3:30 PM: Note writing, evidence sorting, materials review	3:30 - 5:30 PM: Oral report of team judgments to school
3:00 – 4:00 PM: Board interview	3:30 - 5:30 PM: Moderation: evidence sorting, sifting, evaluating: development of consensus judgments	5:30 - 6:30 PM: Team debrief, departure
4:00 – 7:00 PM: Team meeting	6:00 PM: Team dinner	

On-site Review and Feedback

1. The team reviews documents and conducts interviews and classroom visits in accordance with the visit schedule.
2. The team leader keeps the school's leadership informed of the team's progress throughout the visit, providing updates on the team's judgments as they develop. This ensures that the school has every opportunity to present evidence to address the team's questions.
3. The team meets regularly during the visit to share evidence.
4. The team will formulate a consensus judgment to answer two subsidiaries of Key Question Two and Key Question Four in the Performance Framework. This is based on evidence provided to the team during interviews, classroom observations and document reviews while on site.
5. At the end of the visit, the team's findings are presented verbally to the school's leadership.

School Task Checklist

MAYOR'S OFFICE: ITEMS TO BE SENT TO THE TEAM LEADER BEFORE THE VISIT	
1. Accountability Plan (school-specific goals)	
2. Charter Agreement, attachments and amendments	
3. Annual Accountability reports	
4. School-based student assessment information	
5. Enrollment and waitlist information across charter years	
6. Access to parent survey results	
7. Board minutes and policy manual	
8. 1st year site visit reports	
9. 2nd year site visit reports	
10. Videotapes of 3rd year self-evaluation	
SCHOOL: ITEMS TO BE SENT TO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE BEFORE THE VISIT	
11. Master schedule for all staff	
12. The school's mission statement	
13. School leader's resume	
14. List of all school leaders since the inception of the school, including dates of service for each person.	
15. Faculty and staff information forms*	
16. Professional development calendar	
17. Student and staff handbook	
18. Board Questionnaire	
ITEMS AVAILABLE IN THE TEAM MEETING ROOM THE FIRST DAY OF THE VISIT	
19. Sample instructional materials (e.g., curriculum documents)	
20. Samples of student work	
21. Map of school	
ITEMS AVAILABLE TO THE TEAM	
22. Access to all student records: admission, retention, suspension	

*Faculty and Staff Information Forms will be provided to school leadership by the Mayor's Office during the initial correspondence.

Frequently asked questions from school leaders

1. *What do we tell staff about the visit?*

   Staff should know the purpose of the visit and their role within the visit. A first step in communicating these things might be distributing the Introduction and Process and Results sections (Parts I & II) of the protocol.

2. *Space is very tight in our building. We do not have a conference room that can house the team.*

   The team is made up of educators who understand space constraints. They respect the need to protect instructional space and will adapt to what you can offer. Please focus on trying to provide a space with privacy.

3. *How much flexibility do we have in adapting the example schedule?*

   The team recognizes that each school is unique and that the process has to be adapted. The team has specific tasks that must be completed during the visit. However, the team leader will work collaboratively with school leadership to create a schedule that minimizes disruptions to the typical school day.

Key Questions, Indicators, and Sample Sources of Evidence

Standard	Indicator	Sources of Evidence
Is the organization effective and well-run?	2.3 Is the school's board active and competent in its oversight?	• Expert site visit reports • Mayor's Office compliance and governance reviews • Board Meeting minutes • Board Roster
	2.5 Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	• Expert site visit reports • parent and staff surveys • School-wide Survey • Administrative Job Descriptions • Human Resource files • Employee Handbook (4.5) • Team Member Survey Results, • Cambridge Education Report
Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?	4.1 Does the school have a high quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	• School and state documents • classroom observations • school-wide interviews • Saxon Publishers Curriculum Alignment Documents, • Open Court Reading Grades k-6 Curriculum, • Alignment Documents, • FOSS k-8 Curriculum Alignment Documents, • Saxon Math k-12 Research Base, • Open Court Reading Research Base, • Cambridge Education Evaluation, • Lighthouse Academies Education Model Evaluation, • Team Member Survey Results, • Lighthouse Academies Pacing Guide (Second Grade) • A+ Curriculum Guide • NWEA DesCartes sample • School-wide Survey • Teacher Survey
	4.2 Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	• Classroom observations • Student work samples, • Cambridge Education Evaluation, • Classroom Observations, Observation guidelines/ rubric, • Sample of Musician of the week • Teacher Quick Visit Form • Teacher Observation Form • School-wide Survey • Mission Statement

		• Monthly Meetings with Administration • Weekly Staff Meetings • School Charter
	4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?	• Faculty, administrator, parent and student interviews • school documents • School-wide survey • College Inventory Form in Each Advisory Portfolio • Students Attending Ivy Tech • College Table & Bulletin Board in hallways (3.2) • Field Trips to Various Colleges
	4.4 Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	• School documents; • lesson plans; • assessment information; • classroom observations; • school-wide interviews • Sample Kindergarten, First grade, Second grade, Third grade, Fourth grade, and Fifth grade scores, • Sample NWEA report, • Sample of lesson plans, • Scheduled meetings/GLM Notes, • Workshop plans • A+ Weekly Reports • A+ Advisory Tracking Reports • NWEA Scores & ISTEP+ Results • DesCartes Goal Strands • Lesson Plans
	4.5 Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	• Faculty and administrator interviews; • school documents • Teacher and others Interview Protocol, • Teacher Recruitment schedule and interview essay, • Teacher list with experience, date of hire and licensure area, • Professional development opportunities – examples of agendas, • Independent Study Assignment for IPDP, • Teacher Evaluation Procedures • Employee Handbook • Staff Environmental Survey • Highly Qualified Teacher Survey • Teacher Application
	Standard 4.6: Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	• Faculty, administrator, parent and student interviews; • school documents

		- Weekly 'Beacon' Newsletters, - Accountability Report on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools, - INSAI Interview data from parents and students, - Classroom Observation Data, - Cambridge Education Report - Mission Statement Posted in classrooms, handbook, website - School-wide Survey - School Recruitment Brochure - Interview process: mission posted and addressed
	Standard 4.7: Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	- Faculty, administrator and student interviews; - classroom observations - Informal observation notes, walk-through observation notes, Formal observation notes - ILCS Family Survey Results, - Parent Survey, - Discipline ladder, - Evidence of yellow/green slip program; - Number of referrals this year - School Environment and Staff Survey 2007 2007 Family Survey - Student Handbook - Phone Logs - Class Newsletters - Comments on Weekly Class Reports (elementary)
	Standard 4.8: Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	- Parent and student interviews; - school documents - Report Card comments from teachers, - Emails to/from parents, - Progress Reports, - Parent Involvement Surveys, - Proof of Home Visits, - Newsletters (individual classroom/school-wide), - Communication logs, - School Handbook, - Enrollment papers/flyers in Spanish, - Family engagement calendar - School Environment and Staff Survey 2007 - Calendar (3.3) - A+ Weekly Reports (4.4) - School Website